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BULLETIN

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Original Articles

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While the atlas of Vesalian woodcuts, issued jointly by the University of Munich and the Academy Library, was in process of printing, it was realized that publications such as this would be costly to produce and would need very considerable subsidy. Dr. Samuel W. Lambert, Sr., the re-discoverer of the Vesalian woodblocks and the moving spirit in getting the new impression made of them, took the initiative in an effort to secure funds for publication expenses. He succeeded in raising nearly \$16,000 and conceived the idea of setting this up as a "Library Publication Fund" which should become to some extent self-perpetuating. To accomplish this, the publication cost of a book would be met by the Fund and the returns from the book's sale would be restored to the Fund. In the course of time, then, a goodly portion of the money paid out would come back, and could be used in issuing another book.

This conception was an ingenious one and it has worked on the whole surprisingly well. The Fund has been able to finance the publication of Vesalius' *Icones anatomicae* in 1934, Janet Doe's *Bibliography of the Works of Ambroise Paré* in 1937, Arnold C. Klebs' *Incunabula scientifica et medica* in 1938, Wilmer Cave Wright's translation of Ramazzini's *Diseases of Workers* in 1940, Philip Van Ingen's history of The New York Academy of Medicine in 1949, and Judson B. Gilbert's *Bibliography of Articles on the History of American Medicine compiled from "Writings on American History" 1902-1937* in 1951. Now in press are two other volumes more fully described below: a translation of Lancisi's book on aneurysms by Dr. Wright and three essays on Vesalius by Dr. Lambert, Dr. Willy Wiegand, and Mr. William M. Ivins, Jr.

In addition, the Fund has had charge of the remaining copies of several other books:

Dr. Wright's translation of Fracastorius' *De contagione*, 1930; Robert H. Halsey's booklet on the establishment of vaccination in America by Jefferson and Waterhouse, 1936; Martha Ornstein's *Role of Scientific Societies in the Seventeenth Century*, second edition, and Breasted's translation of the Edwin Smith surgical papyrus. Altogether, then, the Fund has fulfilled in no small degree the hopes with which Dr. Lambert launched it.

Perhaps a few words about some of the earlier publications will not be amiss here. In 1543 when the first edition of Vesalius' *De humani corporis fabrica* appeared, an interest in scientific illustration was awakening. Leonardo da Vinci's anatomical drawings had not been published, but Estienne was at work, and already the little volume by Canano had been printed with well executed engravings of the bones and muscles of the arm. The woodcuts in Vesalius' work, however, showed no transitory state, no groping for realism, but were superb and handsome illustrations exciting alike to artists and anatomists. The tradition of art and anatomy is an old one, for artists must perforce study the human body. Over the centuries many large anatomical atlases have come from the presses, showing the parts of the human body in woodcuts, engravings and lithographs, but no one volume has ever received the well deserved acclaim and respect given Vesalius' great work. It is for this reason that the discovery by Dr. Lambert of the existence of the original woodblocks was an event of unusual interest. Little persuading was necessary to convince others that a book containing cuts pulled from these blocks would be of importance in the history of art and medicine. This was a fortuitous decision, for with the second World War came the destruction of the blocks. The *Icones* in-

cludes woodcuts made from all the blocks then surviving, together with collotype reproductions of the 50 or so that were not found, a facsimile of the *Tabulae sex* (the six anatomical tables of 1538) and reproductions of the three drawings which some have thought to be the original of the frontispiece. It forms thus a definitive presentation of the graphic contributions made by Vesalius and his artist to anatomical study.

Dr. Klebs' book was compiled because he believed that the intensive study of incunabula as such had "hindered to no small extent the consideration of their function as literary documents, as carriers of human thought and emotion." As a beginning of this latter study, he undertook to list the earliest printed books in the fields of science and medicine, since it was his idea that in these works the "new mechanically oriented mentality" of the men of science could be profitably studied. His list is a frank first attempt to cite in one place in their various editions all the scientific incunabula he could trace, as a tangible basis for future criticism and emendation. It forms a valuable and unique reference tool for students of the early history of medicine and of printing. The list, appearing first in volume four of *Osiris*, was issued immediately also in reprint form as No. 1 of the Academy Library's "History of Medicine Series," the reprint now unfortunately being out of print.

Ramazzini's famous disquisition on occupational diseases marked the first attempt to recognize and discuss systematically the afflictions resulting from working conditions. No complete English translation of Ramazzini's enlarged second edition existed, and Dr. Wright, seeing the importance of this book in the light of modern concern with industrial diseases, determined to produce a faithful rendering. Presenting the Latin and English texts on opposite pages, the book is readable for its information and convenient for detailed study. Unfortunately it is now out of print.

Ornstein's *Role of Scientific Societies* constitutes a second edition and is the third printing of the author's Ph.D. thesis. It portrays the part played by scientific societies in the intellectual revolution resulting

in the immense scientific discoveries of the previous three hundred years. James Harvey Robinson, in his foreword says, "So far as I know, there is no other work which can bring so many edifying reflections into the mind of the scientific worker and at the same time give the intelligent layman so correct a notion of the manner in which our modern science got under way."

Fracastorius is less well known as the author of his *De contagione* than as the composer of his poem on syphilis. His real contribution to syphilography, however, was the three chapters on this disease in this prose work, published sixteen years after the poem. Fielding H. Garrison has said of this book, "His work contains the first scientific statement of the true nature of contagion, of infection, of disease germs and the modes of transmission of infectious diseases. . . . He seems, by some remarkable power of divination or clairvoyance, to have seen morbid processes in terms of bacteriology more than a hundred years before Kircher, Leeuwenhoek, and the other men who worked with magnifying glass or microscope." The Latin and English text presented on opposite pages makes comparison easy.

The Edwin Smith papyrus has been called "the oldest scientific book in America and the oldest nucleus of really scientific knowledge in the world." Presented to the Academy Library in 1947 by its joint owners, the New York Historical Society and the Brooklyn Museum, it is made up of twelve sheets of beautifully inscribed and preserved papyrus. It is a transcription made about seventeen hundred years before Christ from a much older work, some twenty-three hundred years earlier. Prof. James H. Breasted published the translation of the papyrus in 1930, to produce which he had to render the ancient hieratic Egyptian writing into hieroglyphics before it could be put into English. The remaining copies of this magnificently printed book were given to the Academy along with the papyrus itself and have since been in charge of the Library Publication Fund, the last copy having only recently been sold.

From a consideration of the various books with which the Fund has been concerned, it

will be seen that the reason for the Fund's existence is to make possible the printing of scholarly works in the medical field which no publisher, forced to make ends meet, can afford to bring out. This it has done, with the success and variety of subject matter already shown, and it looks forward to making possible the publication of additional valuable works, particularly in historical medicine, as long as its resources hold out.

These will not last indefinitely, however, without replenishment. The character of the books administered by the Fund is necessarily of the sort which does not make a profit—or their sponsors would not have sought the Fund's aid. By the very nature of the undertaking, outlay is bound to exceed intake. And consequently the Fund will be able to sponsor fewer and fewer books as time goes on, unless friends of

scholarship, of medicine, and of the Academy come forward occasionally to make up for this creeping recession. From time to time additional gifts have been made to the Fund by individuals interested in furthering the publication of a specific book or by others with general goodwill for the advancement of historical medical research. Contributions to the Library Publication Fund represent more than a single benefaction: they will be laid out for one worthy purpose, returning again and again to the fountain-head for re-investment in the spreading of knowledge. Any Fellow or friend of the Academy may be sure that a gift to this Fund will multiply its benefits to scholarship and its satisfaction to the giver many times over, and will at the same time be a lasting and tangible memorial to "Dr. Sam."

A RECENT LIBRARY PUBLICATION

The Library Publication Fund Committee has just issued Dr. Judson B. Gilbert's *Bibliography of Articles on the History of American Medicine compiled from "Writings on American History,"* 1902-1937. This brings to light much medical material otherwise hidden in sources usually untapped by historians of medicine. The series published under the title of *Writings on American History* listed books and articles on the subject which appeared during the years 1902-1937 and consisted of forty-two volumes. Dr. Gilbert's index of the medical titles he culled from them supplements the "Bibliography of the History of Medicine of the United States and Canada," published annually in the *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* from 1940 on. Dr. Gilbert's bibliography is no. 9 of the Library's History of Medicine Series, and copies may be purchased for \$1.25 in the Librarian's office.

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1952

MARCH 6

1. MECHANISM AND MANAGEMENT OF CIRCULATORY FAILURE—William Dock, *Professor of Medicine, State University of New York at New York City, College of Medicine.*

MARCH 13

2. SHUNT OPERATIONS FOR THE TREATMENT OF PORTAL HYPERTENSION WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO CIRRHOSIS OF THE LIVER—Arthur H. Blakemore, *Associate Professor of Surgery, College of Physicians and Surgeons, Columbia University; Attending Surgeon, Presbyterian Hospital, New York.*

MARCH 20

3. DYNAMICS OF ACQUIRED VALVE LESIONS—Lewis Dexter, *Assistant Professor of Medicine, Harvard Medical School; Senior Associate in Medicine, Peter Bent Brigham Hospital.*

MARCH 27

4. LEPROSY—Frank C. Combs, *Professor of Dermatology and Syphilology, New York University Post-Graduate Medical School; Director of Dermatology and Syphilology, Bellevue Hospital; Member of Advisory Medical Board, Leonard Wood Memorial Hospital, (American Leprosy Foundation).*

THE NEW YORK ACADEMY OF MEDICINE

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Friday Afternoon, March 7, at 4:30 o'clock

RECENT CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE LABORATORY TO DIAGNOSIS AND THERAPY

Joseph C. Turner

Associate Professor of Clinical Medicine

Columbia University

Associate Visiting Physician, Presbyterian Hospital

Friday Afternoon, March 14, at 4:30 o'clock

RECENT ADVANCES IN THE MANAGEMENT OF THE POSTOPERATIVE PATIENT

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Memorial Center

Associate Professor of Surgery

Cornell University Medical School

Friday Afternoon, March 21, at 4:30 o'clock

RECENT ADVANCES IN DIETARY THERAPY IN HYPERTENSION AND ARTERIOSCLEROSIS

George A. Perera

Associate Professor of Medicine

College of Physicians and Surgeons

Columbia University

Friday Afternoon, March 28, at 4:30 o'clock

RECENT ADVANCES IN THE SURGICAL MANAGEMENT OF PEPTIC ULCER

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RECENT ADVANCES IN THE MEDICAL MANAGEMENT OF PEPTIC ULCER

Charles A. Flood

Assistant Clinical Professor of Medicine

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